



Chillingly revolutionary? Perhaps. Social Media Strategy learner Leila Keshavjee puts a refreshing twist on a classic confection.

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Any budding entrepreneur would acknowledge that successful ideas do not have to involve reinventing the wheel. Rather, it's reimagining what already exists. For Leila Keshavjee, that involved zeroing in on the humble popsicle. Yes, how to reposition colourfully frozen sugar on a stick.

With an on-the-go lifestyle and devotion to competitive sports, she hungered for a healthy snack with grab-and-go convenience. "I always felt like there are no good healthy desserts. Plus, healthy often doesn't taste good." The solution? She purchased a small popsicle company to develop a line of naturally flavoured ice pops. Happy Pops was born.

To help give her business traction, she worked first with the University of Toronto's Impact Centre, an entrepreneurial hothouse that offers support to new businesses. Leila soon realized that building a strong social media presence was vital to her success. As a recent graduate of U of T's Kinesiology program, she had access to an alumni credit and decided to apply it to Social Media Strategy, a popular new course at the School. It paid immediate dividends.

The decision to take the course did not come easily. "Running a small business—giving up those hours—that's time taken away

from your work and limited social life. You're busy. You want something that's going to give you the best bang for your buck," Leila recalls. "It turned out to be so good! I never expected to learn so much."

She beams about the instruction. "It was honestly fantastic." Tania Nardandrea-Isakovic brought deep industry experience. "She had worked with big companies and it was interesting to know someone who has executed a big budget strategy." Relevant guest speakers, influencers and bloggers and other supporting material gave the course a real-world feel and application.

Leila emerged from the course with the hands-on know how to better plan her social media strategy and rally the tools she needed to build her audience and strengthen her prospects. "I now connect more with my audience. I understand the data, do paid posts and target posts." She now oversees four Instagram accounts, along with leveraging strategies for Facebook and Twitter.

"This course paid off. Companies are finding me." She's managed to get her product into a number of gourmet grocery stores, connect with some of the city's renowned caterers, has filled her calendar with events, and is looking to dramatically expand her production.

Clearly for Keshavjee, her star as an entrepreneur is shining bright. ●